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Our Little Czecho-Slovak Cousin

By

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"Our Little Roumanian Cousin," "Our Little Bohemian Cousin," "Our Little Bulgarian Cousin," "Our Little Servian Cousin," "Our Little Finnish Cousin"

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PREFACE

THE gallant exploits of the Czecho-Slovak army in Siberia won the attention and sympathy of the world to and for their hopes and sacrifices in the cause of freedom. Fighting the Germanic Powers was not a new thing to them. Bohemia, the chief of the Czecho-Slovak states, has always been the battlefield between Slav and Teuton. All that of which Bohemia is proud to-day was won inch by inch through incessant struggle, through bringing to bear every force of civilization possible, on the German rulers. Bohemia's leaders emphasized the need of education; and so effectually, that Bohemia, to-day, ranks as one of the most literate states of Europe. They emphasized idealism, that not by brute force but by being better fit should they eventually win. They

kept alive their faith in a renewal of Bohemia's wonderful, romantic history, that the people might not sink into despair from dwelling on what their proud spirits held to be the degradation of their position. They urged the development of economic strength, and Bohemia to-day is self-sustaining. Through ceaseless battling for their rights, through pride in their great accomplishment in the face of great obstruction, the Czechs held their heads as high as the inhabitants of independent lands. It is an interesting fact that every poet, every musician, every artist felt it his duty to devote his art to his native land.

And here it might be well to state that the Czech of Bohemia, although often called Bohemian, has absolutely nothing in common with the Bohemian meaning gypsy. This term was once applied to some gypsies in France, through a misapprehension that they came from Bohemia. It clung even after the error was

corrected. These particular gypsies really came from Hungary, which however does not mean that Hungarians or Magyars and gypsies are one and the same. The gyspies, like the Jews, do not belong to any one country.

Besides Bohemia, the Czecho-Slovak states comprise Moravia, a rich farming country, the birthplace of the great educator, John Amos Comenius; a part of Silesia, famous for its mines; and Slovakia, also rich in mineral wealth which is largely undeveloped. Of these, Slovakia suffered perhaps the most under the scorn, oppression, and exploitation of the Magyar oligarchy. Taxes in all the states were high. Bohemia, especially, because of its wealth, not only paid for itself, but helped support unproductive Austrian German lands. The language in all of these states is so closely allied that the citizen of one can easily understand the citizens of any of the others.

It is thought by some that Czecho-Slovakia

will be a small country. This is not exactly true, for it will rank eighth in size among all the European states.

One thing that the Czecho-Slovaks have particularly shown during the War, and which argues well for their future, is their capacity for self-government. Not only did they show splendid organization in their efforts to secure recognition, but when the time came to proclaim the Republic, it was found that their machinery was in perfect working order; and, although great reforms have been inaugurated, so far things have progressed with a smoothness not to be found in any of the other newly-formed states.

C. V. W.

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Our Little Czecho-Slovak Cousin

CHAPTER I

LAND OF PERSECUTION

THERE was mourning in the little village high up in the Tatras, as the Carpathian Mountains are called by the Slovaks. Nine men and women lay dead and four lay wounded behind carefully closed doors of the little homes. Scarcely a person except Magyar gendarmes was to be seen on the one main street. Now and then the curious, frightened face of a child peeped out from behind the shaded windows, and again quickly disappeared.

The day before, Magyar officers and priests had come to consecrate the little square church

that had just been erected. It had cost the villagers many sacrifices, but they were proud of it. They had come dressed in their best and full of gayety to the services, never dreaming but that their beloved Slovak pastor would be allowed to assist. When they found, however, that he had been ignored, they pressed closely around those in charge and begged that he be allowed to take part, that they might feel that the church was actually their own.

Did they beg too hard? Was it because they were loyal to a leader who loved and sympathized with his own people? Was that why Magyar guns suddenly boomed, and why the ground lay covered with blood?

The news of the happening spread even to the little village in the more fertile plains, where Jozef lived. The twelve-year-old boy heard it discussed the very next day as he accompanied the haymakers to the fields. In order to hear, he found it necessary to keep

close to the men and women, for they spoke only in half whispers, fearing spies sent out by the Notary, chief officer of the Commune, who seemed to count it among his duties to keep tab on their very thoughts. They knew that they could do nothing, and it gave them a cowed, dejected air. Never had a haying been so dismal.

The killing, dangerous as the topic was, drew the men to the tavern at night. They sat at the plain deal tables in small groups and drank and smoked their long pipes. Now and then one had something to say. Perhaps it concerned the fate of some woman who had resisted the officers during the mad effort at Slovak denationalization in 1892, when forcible transportation of children to purely Magyar districts had been undertaken. Or it may have dealt with the imprisonment of some editor who had had the courage to denounce some new injustice or atrocity.

A tall athletic-looking man with a broad smooth-shaven face, and hair worn rather long, seemed to be listened to with greatest attention. He was plainly from some other district, for his attire was different from that of his companions. It consisted of felt trousers, the seams piped with red, a linen shirt and a sheepskin waistcoat with the wool inside, heavily embroidered on the leather side. His shoes were of soft leather, laced with rawhide thongs across the ankle, and he wore a low, black hat decorated with a red ribbon band.

"I was living in Turciansky Sv. Martin, our one national center, when the effort was made to establish a cellulose factory there," he was saying. "It was one of the many efforts on the part of Slovaks to be more prosperous and progressive. Like other citizens, I invested considerable money in it. The building was erected and the machinery installed and we were awaiting our license from the govern-

"'WILL A TIME NEVER COME WHEN WE SHALL BE FREE?'"

ment, when word came that it could not be given to the present management. We were dumbfounded, although we understood. We were not to be allowed to run our own factory because we did not help oppress our fellow citizens; because we were loyal to our Slovak traditions and to our Slovak land.

"We did not give in without making an effort to secure justice. But, after several months, we knew that we were defeated. During all this time we had not been allowed to do any work in the factory. One thing, finally, the authorities permitted, and that was to run the costly machinery once a week, so that it should not grow rusty. Of course we had to sell, and at a heavy loss to people eagerly awaiting to develop what we had started."

The peasants near nodded their appreciation of the conditions. One more excitable than his fellows jumped up.

"Will a time never come when we shall be

free? Will a time never come when the world recognizes the crime of using force to make people false to their own traditions?" he exclaimed. "To outsiders the Magyars boast of their liberal constitution, of the freedom granted to other nations in the kingdom. We who have no opportunities, who are not allowed a single higher school of our own, nor even a single Magyar Higher School where our language is taught, know what a lie this is. And what advantage is the Magyar language to our children outside of Hungary? Go even to Vienna or anywhere else in the monarchy, and try to make yourself understood with it! You'll see! And we were here before the Magyars; we helped them to know the glorious religion of Jesus Christ; we fought and bled as well as they for our native land." Here his voice changed curiously and a sort of exaltation lit up his face as he said softly: "We must have faith." Then he began to repeat some

lines taken from the great Slovak poet Kollar's "Slavy Dcera" (The Daughter of Slava).

"Stop! It is holy ground on which you tread.
Son of the Tatra, raise your head toward heaven,
Or rather guide your steps towards that oak tree,
Which yet defies destructive Time.
But worse than Time is man who has placed his iron scepter on thy neck, O Slava.
Worse than wild War, more fearful than Thunder, than Fire,
Is the man who, blinded by hate, rages against his own race."

Then again:

"He who is worthy of liberty, respects the liberty of all.
He who forges irons to enslave others, is himself a slave.
Be it that he fetters the language or the hands of others,
It is the same; he proves himself unable to respect the rights of others."

And once more:

"Slavia, Slavia! Thou name of sweet sound but of bitter memory; hundred times divided and destroyed, but yet more honored than ever.
"Much hast thou suffered, but ever hast thou survived the evil deeds of thy enemies, the evil ingratitude also of thy sons.

> "While others have built on soft ground, thou hast established thy throne on the ruins of many centuries."

Here in a rich bass voice he broke forth into the Slovak national song: "Nad Tatrou sa bliska":

> Above Tatra the lightnings flash,
> The thunder wildly roars;
> But fear not, brothers,
> The skies will clear,
> And the Slovak's time will come.

At the conclusion, a peculiar silence brooded in the room. Suddenly, little anxious twitchings might have been noticed. The singer turned. In the doorway stood the Notary with a wicked, sneering smile on his supercilious face.

CHAPTER II

MUSHROOM GATHERING

JOZEF'S home was one of the high-roofed houses whose gable ends faced the broad, whitish main street. It was made of unburnt bricks, plastered outside, with hand-made shingles on the roof. Each window was outlined in pale green and the entrance porch was quite ornamental, having a pretty conventional design, also in green, painted around the door. This, as well as the lines around the window, was the work of Jozef's mother, who enjoyed a certain reputation in the village because she had once been asked to paint some borders around the walls of the rooms of a girls' school in the city of Brno, the capital of Moravia.

Behind the house were the stalls for the

cattle and pigs, and, back of all, a small vegetable garden, edged with sweet smelling herbs and brightly colored flowers. This garden ended in an alley way by a brook, surrounded by green meadows in which geese usually pastured.

In the center of the main street was the Church, a small whitewashed building with a square tower. Next to it were a cross and a statue of the village saint.

Through the middle of the street were rows of underground cellars, one belonging to each family, in which it was possible to keep food and milk ice cold. Vehicles made their way on each side of these cellars.

Around the village were meadows dotted with red poppies and blue corn flowers. Some distance further were fields of potatoes, a few vineyards, and a large, privately owned wood.

It was Helena, Jozef's cousin, who planned the day in the wood for a mushroom hunt, and

secured the necessary permission from the forester in charge. She invited Jozef, his ten-year-old sister Ruzena, and two of Ruzena's girl friends to go with her.

"Goody!" the little girls shouted, and ran for the permission which was readily granted on the one condition that they do not spend all the time in play but really bring home mushrooms, which are highly valued as food.

First each little girl took her herd of geese to the meadow by the brook, and left her flock in charge of an old woman who had nothing else to do but tend geese. Then they met Jozef, who had finished his chores of feeding the cattle and pigs, and Helena, who was older and helped her mother at home. All were dressed in old but bright colored clothes, and all were barefoot and bareheaded, the girls' corn-colored hair hanging in long braids down their backs. All carried baskets in which now lay a little lunch. When they started, Jozef

did not walk beside the others, but ran on ahead or lagged behind. He was afraid, since this was a girls' party, that some of his boy friends might call him a "sissy." He wouldn't have been left out, however, for the world.

It was still early in the morning, but there was already a heavy warmth in the air, so that the coolness they found underneath the tall trees when they reached them, was very welcome. The road had been dusty, but here the moss and grass were still wet with dew and gave forth a fragrant, pungent odor.

The owner did not live in the wood, the only buildings in it being the picturesque log cabin of the forester or caretaker, and a beautiful hunting lodge.

Soon the fun began.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jozef, discovering two mushrooms, or champignons, showing a brown and a red head above the moss.

Such a scampering as there was among the

trees until every basket was filled to overflowing.

Here Etelka, the youngest of the party, found one that she thought the prize of all. It was red with white raised spots.

"Come here!" she cried. "I have found a new kind. Shall I taste it?"

Helena took two rapid leaps toward her.

"Drop it! Drop it!" she exclaimed. "That's a poison muchomurka. Never, never taste anything of which you are not certain if you don't wish to die."

"I thought it prettier than the red ones you found," said Etelka, somewhat abashed.

"It is entirely different," and then Helena showed her how it differed and again impressed on all to confine themselves to those they knew.

Then the baskets were put down in a circle and the children played hide-and-seek among brown trunked firs with long gray mosses festooned from branch to branch, knotted larch

trees, and pines dripping with balsam. At last, tired, they sank down on some netted roots and ate their lunch of thick slices of rye bread spread with goose fat.

"I found some sweet-root here once," Jozef volunteered when they had eaten every morsel.

"Where?" the girls asked eagerly.

Jozef had very vague notions as to where.

"Let's agree," suggested Helena, "each to give a nice mushroom to the one who finds some sweet-root first."

All were willing, and with shouting, laughter and song the search began. Several times Jozef was quite certain that the prize was his, but it was little Etelka who actually found some underneath some blackberry leaves.

"I'm going exploring," Jozef now announced, somewhat nettled that a girl should have been the discoverer. Leaving the pathways, he made his way down a long incline. Not wishing to have the party separated,

Helena led the others as best she could after him.

It was a merry chase Jozef gave them, now to the right, now to the left, then back in a crazy circle. So intent were they in making their way through some underbrush that they were unprepared when, at a sudden turn, they found themselves on the brink of the river that they knew flowed through an edge of the wood.

Out of breath, they seated themselves in a row on the bank and watched the waters glide past. Then they threw in twigs, which they called boats, and grew quite excited when some of these became entangled in water washed grasses.

"Oh, Helena," at last Etelka begged, as she nibbled at her portion of the sweet-root, "please tell us a story."

"A really truly Slovak fairy story," seconded Ruzena.

"Have it exciting," demanded Jozef.

"And true," put in quiet, blue-eyed Marouska.

Helena laughed. "Very well," she said, "it'll be truly Slovak, and exciting, and as true as any fairy tale can be."

CHAPTER III

A SLOVAK FOLK TALE

THERE was once an old king who, knowing that his end was nearing, called his son to him and begged him to take a wife.

"I would fain see you settled before I die," he said.

The son knew not what to do, for of all the maidens in his father's court there was none that had especial charm for him. He was thinking this over in the castle garden when an old woman suddenly stood before him. Wherever she came from, she was certainly there.

"Pluck the three lemons on the glass mountain and you will gain a wife such as next to none possesses," she said. As she appeared,

so she disappeared. Her words, however, sank into the youth's heart, and leaving good-by for his father, he set out at once to find the glass mountain and the magic lemons.

Far over wooded hill and dale he journeyed but saw nothing even resembling a glass mountain. At last, tired out, he threw himself under a tree. As he did so, some ravens, croaking loudly, flew out of its top branches.

"Ah," thought the Prince, "these may direct me to where at least refreshment and rest may be obtained." And starting again, he followed in the direction that they had flown.

After three days and three nights he saw a castle before him, and full of rejoicing, approached it. It was entirely of lead and in the door stood Jezibaba leaning on a leaden staff.

"Haste from here, good youth," she said, "for nothing grows here, and when my son comes home he will devour you."

"Nay, old woman," said the Prince, "that

must not be, for I come with respect for his power and knowledge, to seek his advice as to how I am to reach the glass mountain on which grows a wonderful lemon tree."

"Then I will help you," said Jezibaba, and hid the Prince behind a big broom. As she did so the castle shook, and peeping, the young man saw an awful being come up brandishing a leaden club.

"Yo, ho!" growled the ogre. "I smell human flesh on which to feast."

"Nay, my son," cajoled Jezibaba, "a youth is here, in truth, but only because he values your advice."

"In that case," responded the giant, "let him appear and I shall not hurt him."

The Prince came out, trembling, for he reached only to the giant's knees; but being brave of heart he courteously asked his question.

"Ah, ah!" returned the giant, looking

around as if searching for him. "I don't know where it is, but if you go to my brother in the silver castle, he may direct you. Here, mother, give him some dumplings to last him on his journey."

The Prince bit into a dumpling placed before him and two of his teeth cracked, for the giant's food was of pure lead.

"I shall eat them later," he said, and placing three of them in his pockets, he thanked his hosts and bade them good-by.

Again over hill and dale he traveled, until wearied he sank as before under a thickly branched tree. From the top of this tree twelve ravens flew, and, remembering his former good fortune, he followed in the direction of their flight.

For three days and three nights he had journeyed when he saw before him a castle whose walls glistened in the sun. It was of the finest silver and at the gateway stood Jezibaba,

leaning on a silver staff. He greeted her, saying, "I come from the leaden castle and bear a message for the owner here."

"In that case you are welcome, but that harm may not come to you before my son knows, let me hide you."

Soon after an ogre, more terrible than the first, appeared brandishing a silver club. And as he appeared the castle and ground were shaken.

"Yo-ho!" said the giant, "I smell human flesh for my meal to-day."

"Not so," spoke Jezibaba. "A youth is here, in truth, but not to be harmed. He bears a message to you from your brother of the leaden castle."

So the Prince was invited to come out of his hiding-place, which he did trembling, he seemed so insignificant beside the ogre. He showed the leaden dumplings in token that he spoke the truth and the ogre's face grew quite mild.

"I can't tell you where the glass mountain is," he answered to the query, "but my brother of the Golden Castle will surely know. Take him my greeting. Before you go, sit down with us to our dinner."

But the dinner consisted of silver dumplings, and excusing himself, the Prince placed three in his pocket and went on his way.

Over wooded hill, through valleys he journeyed, until weariness overcame him and he sank down under a tree. Twelve ravens flew from its top as he did so. The sight of them revived his strength and he followed in the direction they had taken.

After three days and three nights, before him shone a castle of gold so bright as to rival the sun's rays. Here Jezibaba, leaning on a golden staff, received him, and here he saw her son the ogre.

"If my brother of the silver castle has not harmed you, neither shall I harm you. What

do you wish of me? Ah, the glass mountain! I know it well. Travel straight to the north and you will come to it. On its top you'll find the lemon tree with fruit so fragrant that it scents the air for miles around. If this fruit is meant for you, it'll drop into your hands of its own accord. If you need food or drink on your homeward trip, cut open a lemon and all of your needs will be satisfied. Now come and eat with us before you leave."

But the meal was all of dumplings of gold and, when the Prince saw them, he urged his haste and would only accept some for his journey.

He traveled straight to the north, and, after three days and three nights, he came to a barren spot in the center of which stood a hill of glass and on it a tree with lemons whose fragrance reached him long before he was near.

He tried to climb the slippery surface, but with every step he slid back a step.

Possibly were he lighter, he thought, he might finally succeed. So taking out a leaden dumpling he threw it away. To his delight, it stuck in the glass, making a step. He threw out another higher up and then the third, up to which he climbed. The silver dumplings followed, and then the gold, and, with their aid, he reached the mountain's top.

Sinking down on his knees under the lemon tree, he held out his hands and the lemons dropped into them one by one. As the last fell, the tree and glass mountain vanished, and how it happened he could not say, but he found himself well started toward home.

He had still a long distance to go, and hunger and thirst overcame him. Remembering the gold ogre's words, he took a lemon from his pocket and cut it open.

As he did so, a maiden so beautiful his eyes were dazzled, leaped out and making a courtesy inquired:

"Have you food for me? Have you drink for me? Have you fine dresses for me to wear?"

"Alas," answered the Prince sadly, "I have none of these."

The maiden courtesied again and instantly vanished.

"Ah, I know now what manner of fruit this is!" thought the Prince.

He could not bring the maiden back, so he sipped the lemon and found it satisfied his hunger and thirst marvelously. He was able to walk a long way now, which was good, for he saw neither food nor drink that day. But toward evening of the next day his throat felt so dry and his stomach so empty that he reluctantly cut open the second lemon.

A maiden more dazzlingly beautiful than the first jumped out of it, and, making a courtesy, inquired as the first had done:

"Have you food for me? Have you drink

for me? Have you fine clothes for me to wear?"

"Alas," the youth sadly answered, "I have none of these."

The maiden courtesied and vanished as completely as the other had done.

He satisfied his hunger and thirst, but resolved that come what might, even though he had to crawl home for weakness, he would not cut the third lemon until he reached there.

Nor did he, for his strength lasted him until next day when he saw the walls of his city before him. Already outside he was recognized; the news spread, and the aged king sent out an escort to meet him and conduct him into his presence.

When the two had embraced, the Prince told his wondrous story. A banquet was prepared for the following day, to which many guests were invited. Costly raiment, too, was made, and brought into the palace walls.

When the guests had assembled conscious that some surprise was in store for them, the Prince cut the third and last lemon. A maiden of beauty so great that it surpassed the dazzling beauty of both of the others, leaped lightly out of it and, courtesying to the Prince, inquired: "Have you food for me? Have you drink for me? Have you fine clothing for me to wear?"

"I have all of these," said the Prince happily, presenting her with the costly gowns.

She put on the most elegant of these, and, so much did it still further enhance her beauty, that the Prince could not take his eyes from her as he led her into the Banquet Hall.

"Will you marry me?" he whispered. And when she smilingly nodded consent, he announced the betrothal amid congratulations and cheering. Shortly after the wedding feast followed.

The young people were very happy until the

old king died and the Prince, having taken his place, had to lead an army to War. Before they parted, that harm might not come to his Queen, a platform for her was erected high in the air. No one could get on it unless the Queen let down a silken cord.

Now, an ambitious gypsy maid begged the Queen so hard to let her come up to comb and braid her hair, that the Queen consented. The gypsy talked and flattered as she combed, until the Queen fell asleep, and then the girl killed her by plunging a sharp pin into her head.

As the pin sank in, a snow-white dove flew out. Nothing remained of the Queen except her beautiful clothes, which the gypsy donned and sat down on the throne.

When the King returned, he thought his wife terribly changed and would have nothing to do with her. He mourned incessantly for what she once had been.

One day, as he walked sorrowing in the gar-

den, a snow-white dove lit on his hand. He stroked its pretty feathers and as he did so, felt a pin head on the top of its head.

"What is this!" he exclaimed, and drew it forth.

No sooner had he done so, than his wife of old stood before him just as he had first seen her in her wondrous charm and beauty. She told him all that had occurred. The wicked gypsy was put to death and nothing further ever came to mar the happiness of the heaven married pair.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOICE OF THE WOOD

It was getting dusky in the woods when the little party started reluctantly for home. The birds were already chattering their good nights before preparing for sleep and a belated squirrel or two looked inquisitively down at them.

Now and then one of the children found berries that tempted even Helena to linger.

"I did not know there were so many yet," she remarked. "I must ask father to beg the forester to let me come soon again for them alone. Of course I shall take you all."

As the trees grew a little more scattered, Ruzena, who had been walking lost in thought, now raised her head.

"Old Susanna," she said, "told me once that the trees talk, but I don't believe it."

"It's not the trees," said Jozef quickly, "but the spirit of the woods who answers when you call to him."

Putting his hand to his mouth, he shouted: "O-ho! O-ho!" And from somewhere came the answer "O-ho! O-ho!"

All the children looked back.

"Let me try," said Helena, smiling. Then she shouted: *"Dobrou noc! Dobrou noc!* Good night! Good night!"

"Dobrou noc! Good night!" came back as before.

"It's a mocking spirit," said Marouska, walking as close to Helena as she could.

"It's only the Echo Spirit," returned Helena, laughing.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" was returned from the woods so clearly that Marouska seized Helena by the hand.

They had reached the edge of the forest. It was still day outside and Marouska soon forgot that she had almost been really afraid.

She remembered it, however, the next day when a heavy summer shower came with lightning and thunder.

"I wonder what the spirit does when it rains," she said to herself.

She thought of the birds and squirrels that she had seen. Would the storm hurt them? She asked her father when he came home after it was all over. He smiled and said:

"I have to see Zerzan, the forester, about something. You can go with me to see if any birds are left."

How beautiful the wood looked when they reached it! Every leaf sparkled, while the birds sang far more than on the day before, Marouska thought.

"You see," said her father, "that all nature sometimes likes a bath."

"And the spirit of the wood, did he also like it?" inquired Marouska with some timidity. Then she told her father about the voice that had answered their call.

"That's the Echo," said her father, and whether it was because he could not explain it, or whether it was because the forester just then met them, he made no further explanations. Thus it came about that Marouska kept her bewildered first impressions for many a day after.

CHAPTER V

SUMMER

"We're off! Good-by!" cheerily called out four sturdy, red-cheeked girls, early one morning. They were walking in pairs, with bundles in their hands and their shoes slung over their backs. They belonged to some of the poor families of the village, and intended tramping it to the richer plains to work on two of the farms there, where their help would be very welcome and well paid. Each had taken food for the journey; rye bread, bacon, and a cheese called *brindza,* made from sheeps' milk by Slovaks in the mountains.

Everybody waved to the girls or had a pleasant word for them as they passed by. When the last house had been reached, their voices rang out sweetly in song.

In vain is not thy toil,
In vain is not thy faith;
The Lord God in the Heavens
Gathers all of labor's sweat.

And again:

Songs, songs, whence come ye?
Descended from the heavens
Or grown in the woods?

Not down from the heavens
Nor grown in the woods,
But born in the hearts
Of maidens and youths.

Then the more melancholy strain:

My lips are singing,
My eyes are smiling,
But tears stream from my heart.

Ruzena half envied them as she listened. Everybody at her house, except her baby brother and herself, had left for the hayfield to help with the mowing. She had not yet taken the geese to pasture, and as she started off, brother tried to toddle after her.

"Come, you may go with me to-day," she said good-naturedly, lifting him up in her strong arms and carrying him to the alleyway. But it is not easy herding geese that try to stray and carrying a heavy baby at the same time. Although the distance was not great, Ruzena found that it was more than she could do.

"I must leave you here," she said, panting, and put baby down by the roadside. "Now be good and play and sister will hurry back."

Juraj was always good, and although he looked a little wistful, made no complaint. Perhaps he was used to being left in that fashion. He had nothing on his little body except a short shirt; but on his head, according to custom, he had a most elaborately embroidered cap or rather hood. He sat patiently still for a while; then a big black beetle made him struggle to his feet. He reached forward to get it, turned a summersault, and by the

time he had straightened himself up, the beetle had disappeared in the grass.

Juraj looked around for it and then catching sight of the brook near by, half walked, half crawled to it. There were all sorts of things to interest him here, and, without a moment's hesitation, he walked right into the middle and sat down with something of a thump on the stony bottom. Even then he did not cry, but tried to reach the funny little water insects that scurried so fast everywhere about him.

"Juraj, Juraj, why, you're all wet!" exclaimed Ruzena, snatching him up when she returned. Then Juraj for the first time cried, just a plaintive little cry that seemed to ask why he must give up so innocent a pleasure.

He was tight asleep in his own little cradle, that had served two generations of children, when Ruzena heated some food that her mother had prepared, put it into a pail, filled a

jug with fresh water, and started with these for the hay-field.

Some of the mowers were still being followed by barefoot women and girls in bright-colored skirts, who tossed the hay over their heads and shoulders. Others were already sitting and lunching in the shade of the lumbrous wagons. Large cream-colored oxen, with very long horns, stood unyoked near by.

Ruzena's mother returned home with her daughter, for neighbors had come over to help, and although she had baked all the day before, she felt anxious lest something should be lacking on the supper table.

It was just getting dusk when the sound of singing, not boisterous, but low and sweet, came from the road and announced the hay-makers. With their heads crowned with grain, they walked beside or stood in the clumsy wagons drawn by sleepy-looking oxen with poppies and corn flowers wound around their horns.

How good the things did taste after the hard work! Ruzena helped her mother wait on the guests, and as a treat, was allowed to go with them to the tavern where they danced their own national dances until the church bell rang out midnight.

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGE INCIDENTS

"R-R-R-RUB-RUB-RUB!" went the little drum beaten by the bailiff as he stalked through the village. Every one hurried to door or window to learn what the news might be. It would not have created much stir in a city, but it did create quite a stir in the double row of houses.

"Beran's cow, in your very next village," announced the bailiff, "stepped into a hole and broke her leg at noon to-day, so that she had to be killed. If you want fresh meat, here's your chance."

When the bailiff had gone from end to end of the street and back again shouting the news, he was surrounded by people anxious to know the particulars: just where the accident had

occurred; how the cow happened to step into the hole; who first found it out; who killed her; and many other things.

Almost every one wanted some of the meat, and several of the men set out that very evening to secure a share.

The next day Ruzena drove the geese to pasture in the hay stubble where they were always taken that no grain might be wasted, when the hay was already in the barn waiting to be threshed. When she returned, she found that a wandering tinker with mousetraps, rolls of wire and mending material slung over his back, was making his yearly visit.

The tinker's native place, like that of many another Slovak tinker, was Kysuca, near the Silesian border. It was not from there, however, that he had just come, but from Nytra, a place of twelve thousand inhabitants, once the capital of the great Moravian Kingdom under Svatopluk, of which Slovakia was an important

part. There was scarcely a door at which he did not stop, not merely to do some tinkering but to deliver messages from distant friends or relatives, or to relate what was going on in the greater world. He had been as far as Bohemia in his year's travels, and had much to say of that prosperous and progressive country. His opinions, though sometimes crude, were listened to with respect.

"When I first started making my rounds twenty years ago," he said, "I used to stop for a day or two with my wife's cousin in Praha (Prague). Then the Germans had succeeded in getting all the business into their hands; but now the Czechs have got it all back again. The banks, too, are almost all Czech. There is hardly a German sign to be seen anywhere. Every street has its own Czech name, but how the Czechs had to fight for this, and how sore the Germans are over it! The Czech believes in fighting for the right, he believes in educating

his children, he is willing to make any sacrifice that will make Bohemia his own again. We're a different people; we are too ignorant to know how to go about things, and when we do know we're so mild we don't do it."

"Much good fighting would do us!" remarked Stefan the blacksmith. The other men laughed. "Come and show us how," they said.

"I don't mean fist fighting," the tinker returned half angrily. "I mean fighting with brains. Why can't we —"

"That's all right," interrupted a young man, his face all aflame, as he stepped into the ring. "But what chance have we to develop our brains when we haven't a single Higher School where the Slovak language is taught? When every opportunity is cut off from one if he somehow manages to educate himself, unless he turns traitor to his mother tongue and swears that he is a Magyar? Don't I know? Didn't I

hope to work myself up into a position where I could serve my nation? And you know my record. Imprisonment and imprisonment and imprisonment. The Czechs are helping themselves, but no progress will come for us until the world at large will awaken to its duty of preventing tyranny and exploitation."

"True!" muttered many of the men; and then slipped away one by one as some one pointed out the Notary approaching in the distance.

An old woman now engrossed the tinker's attention. She was quite a character in the village and some of the people would have agreed that she was the chief character. No one called her by her name. She was "Aunty" to everybody for miles around. In sickness and death, in birth and rejoicings, her advice was sought, even sometimes before that of the village priest. She generally carried a basket of herbs on her arm, for she was always

hunting for some or ready to distribute some to others. She knew their virtues as no one else did.

Ruzena chose that moment to bring out an earthen pot to be wired. She hoped the tinker would be so busy talking to "Aunty" that he would forget to indulge in his favorite pastime of teasing.

But no sooner did she come up than he looked at her seriously to ask: "Have you caught any birds this year by sprinkling something on their tails?" And when Ruzena smilingly shook her head and said shyly, "None," he wanted to know where a dog goes when he follows his nose.

When at last he handed back her pot so skillfully mended that it was, as he claimed, as good as new, he said more seriously than before:

"His lordship in the next village has commanded me to bring him a new kind of strap, and I think that one of your braids of hair will

be just the thing for it. Stand still just a moment while I find my shears."

But instead of standing Ruzena was running home, half afraid that the funny tinker might really cut off the hair. And as she ran she heard him sing the first part of a folk song that he had just learned from some peasants in the neighboring brother land of Moravia:

"M — m, m — m, two mosquitoes married today;
M — m, m — m, not a drop of wine have they."

"Does the tinker go all over the world?" Ruzena asked her mother, humming the tune that her quick ear had caught.

"M-mm, yes," her mother answered rather absent-mindedly. She was busy preparing the supper which the tinker was to eat with them.

"He does his wiring well," she said as she put down the pot he had fixed. "He's somewhat rattle-brained, I think sometimes, but he learns a lot more going around than if he stayed here. He hasn't come from any distant

country to us. Only from Nytra. You might ask him about that place. If we don't get him started on something else he will bring up the Czechs again and what they're doing and what we're not. Since we can't do anything, it's no use repeating all that."

Ruzena remembered when all were seated at the table, and asked the tinker if he would tell them something about Nytra.

"I learned in school," she concluded proudly, "that it was the capital of the great Moravian Kingdom."

The tinker looked pleased. "Yes, under Svatopluk," he said. "Then we had nothing of which to be ashamed. But do you know anything about that Svatopluk?"

Ruzena shook her head.

"Never mind," said the tinker kindly. "There's some grown people in this village that don't know any more. Do you know?" and he turned to Jozef.

Jozef hurried to swallow the food in his mouth.

"I know the kingdom all went to smash after he died," he shouted more loudly than he intended.

His father and mother exchanged pleased looks.

"Do you know why?" asked the tinker. "You don't? Well, I'll tell you as I heard a priest tell it to some boys.

"When Svatopluk knew he must die, he called his three sons to him. He selected the eldest to rule after him. The two younger to whom he left large estates, he bade be loyal to their brother.

"At his orders, a servant brought in three stout twigs fastened tightly together. 'Break this,' he said, handing the twigs to his oldest son. But the Prince found it impossible. Then he handed it to the second son and then to the third, but the twigs remained unbroken.

"'Cut the cord,' he ordered the servant.

"This was done and Svatopluk handed a twig apiece to each of the princes.

"'Now break it,' he commanded. This each one easily did.

"'Here you see,' he said, 'that when three stick closely together nothing can injure them, but when they fall apart it is easy to destroy them entirely. So will it be with you. Remain united, working in harmony and forgiving one another, and your enemies will find it impossible to overcome you. But live divided, and you will not only fight among yourselves but your neighbors will master each of you.'

"Alas, what he foretold would come with dissensions, did come. Foolish, selfish ambition destroyed the foundations of this mighty kingdom which included Moravia, Slovakia, Poland, Silesia, northern Bohemia, and a large part of northern Germany."

CHAPTER VII

AN ADVENTURE

It was Saturday and Ruzena had just returned to the village from some distance outside of it. She brought back some of the red sand that was prized highly for sprinkling over the hard earthen floors of the house. She spread it carefully and then went into the kitchen to help her mother with the baking for the morrow.

Sunday was a blessed day in more ways than one for the villagers. No matter how hard the work of the week had been, the Sabbath afforded relaxation. Everybody who could went to church, and exceedingly attractive did they look when they trooped out in twos and threes after the service. The women especially

looked like a bevy of bright flowers in their gay attire.

There is no one national costume in Slovakia. It varies from district to district. Here the women wore a snowy chemise with short puffed sleeves ending in a wide ruffle. Above this ruffle was a pretty band of hand embroidery in orange-colored silk. Over this chemise was a bodice. The heavily starched skirt was full of tiny carefully arranged pleats with another skirt of transparent flowery material, also pleated, worn over, each pleat in this upper skirt being fitted into that of the skirt beneath.

The men were quite as picturesque in high boots, and close-fitting trousers of black cloth embroidered in black and yellow. Over the shirt, a short sleeveless waistcoat was worn, fastened with one button. The two rooster feathers at the back of the men's hats gave them something of a dashing air.

The young men and boys always took their

seats near the door. The older men sat at the right of the aisle, the older women at the left. The finery of the young married women and of the girls did not allow them to be seated. The former stood in the aisle, the latter in rows near the altar. When they knelt down their skirts stood out so far on every side that no one could come near.

In the afternoon the young people paired for a dance at the pavilion in the tavern grounds; the children wandered off for play, while the older folks visited at one another's houses or met in the tavern to talk over the little happenings of the week.

Wherever Ruzena was, Etelka and Marouska were also apt to be. On this particular Sunday the three had an adventure that gave them all, but especially Etelka, who was the most imaginative, quite a little thrill.

It was all because Jozef and one of his friends, Janik, had insisted on following the

little girls about, twitching their long hair and playing all sorts of tricks on them. When something called the boys away for awhile, Ruzena exclaimed:

"I wish we could hide from them!"

"I'll tell you a good place," suggested Etelka; "let's go into our storeroom. Father put a lantern down there and we can light it and wait until the boys give us up."

Marouska and Ruzena thought this just the thing, and away the three hurried to the underground cellars. Every one was busy with his own affairs, so no attention was paid to them, and they climbed down the ladder into the dugout belonging to Etelka's parents, without being seen. Etelka lit the lantern and then propped up the door slightly as she had seen her mother do. The girls stood waiting and listening.

At last they heard boys' voices. "It's Jozef and Janik," whispered Ruzena. Whether it

was or not, the voices grew fainter and soon could not be heard.

"They've passed, but if we go out they'll find us," said Marouska in her quiet, sad little voice.

Her two friends agreed. "But," asked Ruzena, "what can we do here?"

Etelka's eyes sparkled. A bold plan had occurred to her.

"Let's explore the secret passages," she exclaimed.

"Let's!" echoed her companions delightedly yet fearfully.

"We won't go far," continued Etelka, knowing that such explorations were considered dangerous and forbidden. "Just a little ways."

"Just a little ways!" Ruzena and Marouska again echoed breathlessly.

These so-called secret passages were very old and no one seemed to know for certain why they

had been built. The story generally accepted was that they belonged to the time immediately following the Hussite Wars, when many Czechs were forced to emigrate to Slovakia. While they were allowed to come, meetings to study the Bible had to be held in secret. These passages, connected with several of the cellars, made such meetings possible. Although the Slovaks in the village were now Catholics, they had not forgotten stories of martyrdom and courage handed down from those times. They told how a pastor had traveled from village to village hidden in a load of hay; of how a Bible was once saved by being thrown down into a well, and many other tales.

Taking the lantern, Etelka led the way into a little opening. It did not go far, for the earth had fallen down from the side walls, partially blocking it.

The girls looked at one another.

"I know what we can do," suggested

Ruzena. "I saw an old board in the cellar. We can dig some of the earth away with that," and she ran to get it. She also brought back a big wooden ladle, and with these unusual implements, Marouska and Ruzena dug, while Etelka held the lantern, until the obstruction could be passed. There was comparative freedom after that for quite a distance. At one point the passage divided into three parts. The girls chose to go into the broadest, but scarcely had they gone twenty steps when the light in the lantern went suddenly out.

"Oh, dear, now we're in for it," burst from Ruzena, as she felt Marouska catch tight hold of her sleeve.

"Let's keep hold of one another and go back," suggested Etelka, her voice trembling slightly.

It was not easy, for they had to feel their way along the wall. They became conscious, too, that the air was bad. Once quite a bit of

"THE GIRLS HUDDLED TOGETHER, TOO MUCH FRIGHTENED TO MOVE"

earth fell down before them, but, fortunately, not enough to hurt or stop them. It seemed to them that they had been walking very, very long, when Ruzena broke the silence that had fallen, by volunteering:

"We must have come to where the passage divides."

"Yes, and I wonder —" Etelka did not finish, for Marouska clutched her wildly by the arm.

"Oh, look back," she whispered fearfully.

The girls turned. Coming behind them but from another direction were two red lights evidently carried by some person or persons.

The girls huddled together, too much frightened to move.

Suddenly Ruzena gave a funny, relieved, nervous laugh. "Why, if it isn't Jozef and Janik!" she exclaimed aloud and then ran forward and threw her arms about the astonished boys.

"Oh, you dears, how did you know that we were lost?"

Jozef and Janik were surprised. They had had no idea that the girls were in the cellar. They had gone into Janik's storeroom for some raw sour-kraut, and Janik had related how his big brother had ventured quite a distance into one of the passage-ways the week before. "Let's go, too," had suggested Jozef. Both boys had run home for some lanterns, never dreaming that they should meet the girls.

"Huh," grunted Jozef, after Ruzena's embrace, not yet comprehending. And when the boys did comprehend, well — it was rather nice to be treated like heroes! They listened to the girls, but although they glanced sideways now and then at each other, offered no explanations.

Then Jozef and Janik quarreled and while waiting to make up, Jozef had an inspiration.

"The girls won't try this again," he communed with himself, "and sometime I'll give

Janik a scare by going through our passage to his. Perhaps I'd better store a little food in it, for I might ask some of the other boys to come in with me, and it'd be nicer to have some food and play we're those old Hussites."

So, little by little, Jozef smuggled in food of all kinds; some sugar, more wheat than several boys could eat, sunflower and pumpkin seeds,— the latter considered a particular delicacy,— a small bag of raisins and nuts, a handful of dried mixed fruit in a preserve jar, and various other things.

CHAPTER VIII

A VISIT TO "MATTHEW'S LAND"

OTHER things occurred so unexpectedly and rapidly that boylike, Jozef forgot all about his store of hidden food. Late in the Fall, most of the children under twelve were back in school.

Their home chores now had to be done on Wednesdays, which, instead of Saturdays, were their holidays, or before or after school hours. Ruzena's favorite studies were embroidery, drawing and painting, for, like most of the peasants, she had inherited a decided art instinct. Even her mother, who had never had any lessons, had painted without patterns pretty borders around the guest and living rooms; while her father, also untaught, had made and carved the two pretty chairs in the latter, and

also the long shelf on which stood a fine array of village pottery. Besides the work at school, Ruzena also had crocheting, knitting, and embroidery at home. It was mostly for herself, for her mother had her follow the local custom of beginning in childhood to work on her trousseau.

There were other holidays from school work besides the Sundays and Wednesdays, such as Dusickovy Vecer, which comes in November, the Slovak Memorial Day.

It was frosty and cold on this particular memorial day; there were even some icicles hanging from trees and bushes. A few flowers, from indoor window gardens, and hundreds of candles, had been placed and lit on the rude graves. In their dim light, figures could be seen kneeling and praying. Here the light fell on an old man with a patient, gentle face, and there on a young girl, her red skirts adding color to the scene. Children were about, too,

most of them in fur coats, and none of them quiet for long. In the middle of the cemetery a group of men and women were gathered around a cross, while some one prayed. It was an impressive occasion, and as the villagers strolled homeward there was no loud singing nor even talking.

After Dusickovy Vecer, Jozef and Ruzena were taken by Jozef's godfather to a little village far up in the beautiful Tatras, where life was much more primitive and much harder than in their own little rude village, the Magyar Government showing no concern whatever in the people's welfare.

On the way to this village, they crossed a part of what the people around call "Matthew's Land," because over it once ruled one of the great figures of their history, Matthew Csak, Lord of the Vah and Tatras, as he called himself.

There are many castles in the mountains, but

the most interesting was that actually inhabited by Matthew in the early part of the fourteenth century.

Matthew's career was brief but remarkable. He was a Palatine, holding the highest office in the power of the King to bestow. He ruled over what is now the greater part of Slovakia, possessing enormous wealth, of which thirty fortified castles were a small part. In these castles he held court on a scale that rivaled that of the King himself.

When the male line of the Arpad Kings of Hungary became extinct, it was largely through his influence that a Czech King, Vaclav II, was called to the throne. Unfortunately, instead of coming himself, Vaclav sent his son, then a lad of thirteen.

To this the Pope, who had much to say in politics in those days, objected, and the King of Anjou, taking advantage of being preferred, seized the throne.

Powerful nobles rose up in arms against him, but the one he feared most was Matthew. He tried his best to gain his favor, but in vain. Then the Pope excommunicated Matthew, who retaliated by burning a bishop's stronghold. From everywhere nobles, zemans, and peasants flocked to his standards.

The Anjou King now made peace with all the other nobles, and resolved to direct his efforts to crushing the chief rebel. Near the little River Torysa, the armies of the two met. The King's was enormous, and although the Slovaks under Matthew fought bravely, they were so greatly outnumbered that they were defeated.

Although Matthew was defeated, he was not reduced in rank. He retired for a time to one of his castles, and then gradually assumed his old powers, which he exercised to the day of his death.

"Had Matthew succeeded in this rebellion,"

Jozef's godfather concluded in telling the story, "he might have laid the foundations of a successful Slovak state, for the Slovaks at that time still had in mind the part they had played in the big Moravian Kingdom of Svatopluk."

CHAPTER IX

JOZEF GOES TO SCHOOL

A WONDERFUL opportunity now came for Jozef. He was only twelve and had just completed the course in the primary school.

"Jozef is bright. He is above the average in his studies," the teacher told his parents. "He ought to continue school work."

"I'd let him go on if we had schools of our own, but I won't have him go to a Magyar school to forget his language and learn to despise his own kin like Shlachta's boy," his father declared with emphasis.

"Better have him ignorant than false to his birthright," his mother agreed.

The teacher nodded. He understood.

"If you could only send him to Bohemia," he suggested.

" If," repeated the father grimly.

" What is this about Bohemia?" asked Jozef's godfather, who had just come up. He was a tall, thin, muscular man, whose hair hung down his back in two tiny braids. He was known for his liberal and somewhat " heretical " opinions. " I am going there after the holidays. Do you want to send some message?"

The teacher explained to him how things stood. " If we don't educate our children," he pleaded, " the Magyars will take greater and greater advantage of our ignorance."

Jozef's godfather stood a few moments in thought. Then he nodded good-by and left. The teacher was not put out. He was glad that he was going to think it over.

The next morning the godfather was over at Jozef's house bright and early.

" I've decided," he said, " that the teacher is right. In Bohemia, Jozef will learn more

about his own country than we can ever teach him here and he'll learn to fight. I'll take him with me and somehow we'll find means to pay for his schooling there."

So, one day, Jozef found himself whirled away on a train over the fertile farm lands of Moravia, in parts of which there are many Slovak villages, through Nivnitz, where the great Moravian educator, John Amos Comenius was born, through towns and hamlets until they came to Brno, Moravia's capital. They changed trains here, and Jozef had time to see the Spielberg, crowned by a citadel long used as a Government prison, with its horrible torture cells, which throw some light on the conception of humanity of the Hapsburg Monarchy.

And then away again but not to Praha, Bohemia's capital. Instead, Jozef's godfather was bound for Tabor, one of the most interesting towns of Bohemia, having been founded by

one of the great religious reform parties at the outbreak of the Hussite Wars. This was the town of Jan Zizka, the redoubtable military hero of the times.

Jozef was full of questions regarding this patriot and military genius — the greatest one of his age. He learned that he is regarded by many as the inventor of modern tactics, that he organized peasants and mechanics so wonderfully that they beat back and drove into despair the best trained arm-clad knights of Europe; that he never lost a battle; and that he probably was the composer of a splendid hymn, "All Ye Warriors of God," which seemed to inspire his men with wonderful power as they sang it marching to battle. At the battle of Domazlice (Taus), which took place after Zizka's death, 130,000 crusaders entered Bohemia, proclaiming that they would not let a single heretic live. They proceeded with plunder and slaughter until they reached Domazlice, where

they pitched their camp. Some days after, the report spread among them that the Hussites, now under the command of Zizka's splendid successor, Prokop the Great, were on their way and that a battle was imminent.

While the Hussites were still four miles distant, the crusaders heard the rattle of their famous wagons and the mighty tones of the hymn sung by the whole Hussite army. It made such a terrible impression that the fanatical soldiers fled before the song, even the curses of the Cardinal failing to stop them.

Not knowing the passages of the gray Bohemian mountain forest they were overtaken by the Hussite vanguards; many thousands were killed and many more taken prisoners. Their camp with all the ammunition and provisions fell into the hands of their captors. Thus a song proved more mighty than the sword.

"Fear not those, the Lord hath said,
Who would your body harm.

For love of your fellowmen,
He hath ordered you to die,
Hence take courage manfully."

This great victory for a time put an end to all efforts to make Bohemia betray her conscience.

Before Jozef's godfather left for home, he told the boy another and beautiful story about Prokop.

"Not only did Prokop repulse the enemy when they invaded Bohemia, but he himself made incursions into neighboring lands. Once he led his army to the walls of Naumburg, in German Saxony. The inhabitants were seized with great terror for all counted on the town being entirely destroyed.

"In the midst of the dismay, some one advised the townspeople to send the children of the town to the enemy's camp. 'It is possible,' he said, 'that they may soften the leader's heart.'

"The people took the advice and the next day four hundred and fifty children, gowned in white, assembled before the Town Hall. Two hundred armed citizens accompanied them to the gate.

"When the children reached Prokop's camp, they fell down on their knees before him and begged him to spare the town.

"Prokop was deeply affected. He detained the children until evening, treating them to all the peas and cherries that they could eat. When it began to grow dark he sent them home. 'Tell your parents,' he said to them, 'that I will spare the town. But see that when you reach the gate you shout: "Victory to the Hussites!"'

"The next day the Hussites left the vicinity without having harmed a single living thing.

"In memory of the event, the people of Naumburg hold an annual festival in which the children march to the spot where once stood the

Hussite camp. Here they are treated to peas and cherries. The occasion is called the Hussite Cherry Festival."

CHAPTER X

SCHOOL DAYS IN BOHEMIA

After arrangements had been made for Jozef to live with some distant relatives, his godfather bade him good-by.

"Learn all you can, the better to help your native land," he said to him in parting.

It was not long before Jozef felt quite at home. The boys at first teased him about his dialect, but it was such good-natured teasing that he did not mind it. Once when the teacher overheard them, he said:

"Do not care. Your language may not be as literary as ours, but it is softer and more musical, and hence much more pleasing."

Jozef became very fond of the city. With a "heretic" friend, he used to wander over the

"HE USED TO WANDER . . . TO THE FORTIFICATIONS"

curiously arranged, toothed old streets, to the fortifications that still stand, or to the river that surrounds the city on three sides. Or they would stand and stare and discuss the statues of Jan Hus, the religious martyr, of his marvelously eloquent friend, Jerome of Prague, of Jan Zizka, and of Prokop the Great. These and many historic relics were in the odd, triple-gabled Town Hall, finished in 1521, in the big market square.

The statue of Zizka had an especial fascination for them. They could see him walking right there in the Square, surrounded by armed warriors, looking just as here represented, with expressive bent head, long mustache, and heavy fur coat over his shirt of mail. In one hand he held a sword, in the other, that terrible weapon that they knew was once called by the fanciful name of the morning star.

Besides the Town Hall there were other interesting irregularly built buildings, with

peculiar ornamentation, in the Square. Before one of them still stood one of the stone tables on which the Taborites took communion in the open air.

How very different Bohemia seemed to him from Slovakia! Here every one was proud of his nationality, which despite heavy taxes and many other oppressions, the people had retained through the efforts of great unselfish leaders who ceaselessly battled for their rights. He forgot the humility that he used to feel when meeting a contemptuous Magyar. Soon he held his head as high as the Czech boys did when they came face to face with Germans who through wrong training, in their wicked conceit, looked upon every nationality not their own, as far below them. In Tabor this was not at all hard with all the voiceless eloquent teachers around that reminded of past greatness and resistance to injustice.

Jozef soon felt one of the family in the ex-

cellent home in which he boarded. Nothing pleased the good-hearted house mother more than his usually hearty appetite, and she seldom failed to applaud it by some quaint folk saying, as "A hearty eater is a hearty worker." She had no patience with fussiness about selection of food, and if she saw any would exclaim: "He who is fussy about his food, may learn to think any cheese would be good."

In the first days of his stay, Jozef accompanied her once to a market day in the Square. The farmers seemed to him to have brought a little of every kind of food that one could wish for. There was sweet home-churned butter, cottage and other cheese, eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit, honey, mushrooms, poppy seed for cakes, and grain of all kinds.

In school Jozef was now in what was called the Lower Gymnasium. He had to be in the school building, which was not far from his boarding place, at a quarter to eight in the

morning. Sundays and Thursdays were holidays. The school exercises began by all the pupils repeating the Lord's Prayer and Ave Maria. After that the time was devoted to the regular studies. The classes were named by Latin numerals, prima, secunda, etc. to octava.

At ten o'clock came a short recess, in which the children of the Lower Gymnasium played ball; those of the upper thought it below their dignity to do so. Sometimes instead, the pupils indulged in a little lunch by buying buttered bread, cheese, or fruit from the janitor.

Whenever a Professor entered the room or left it, all the children stood up as a sign of respect.

Jozef soon came to share the devotion of the children to the teacher, a man of delicate health but great spiritual vision, who constantly called the attention of the pupils to the idealism found in Bohemian (Czech) history. Through him the pupils learned, too, that Austria was largely

parasite, living on Czech wealth; that the Czechs paid sixty-two per cent of all the taxes in Austria to support passive non-Slav lands; that eighty-three per cent of Austrian coal was mined in Bohemia; that sixty per cent of the iron was found there; that ninety per cent of beet sugar factories were located there; that textile and other industries were important. They also learned that the renowned Bohemian glass employs over fifty thousand workers; that there are excellent highways, extending to ten thousand miles, and several important railroad lines; that one-third of all the gold and silver mined in Hungary is mined in neglected Slovakia. Jozef was particularly impressed by the fact that despite all the discrimination of the Government against the Czech schools, the Czechs were by far the most literate people of the monarchy.

History came to be Jozef's favorite study. He devoted much time particularly to the

glorious reign of Charles I, known also as Emperor Charles IV, who probably did more for Bohemia than any other monarch.

One of the teacher's favorites was King George (Jiri) of Podebrad, sometimes called the "Heretic King of Bohemia." Jozef did not appreciate his full significance and was more interested in the stories told of his jester, whose name was Palecek.

Palecek was no ordinary jester. He was an educated man of noble birth, who by playing the fool could often tell truths other courtiers dared not utter. Because he addressed every one, even the King with his permission, as "Brother," he himself came to be known as "Brother Palecek." One thing Brother Palecek felt as a particular duty was to keep the King in lively humor, for the cares of state were very heavy at the time.

Once the King gave a large dinner. At his table sat the Queen, princes and princesses, and

the highest nobles of the realm. The younger nobles and others who served the King sat at a table apart. When Brother Palecek arrived, he was not very well pleased at being placed at this lower table. Soon he had another grievance; big fish were being passed to the King and those around him, while only little fish with many bones, came to the table at which he sat.

Gaining the attention of those about him, he took up one of the fish and held it to his ear and asked it: "Little fish, do you know anything about my brother?" and then placed it down again.

Then he took a second fish and asked: "Little fish, do you know anything about my brother?" Again he laid it down and took up a third.

The young people about him burst into laughter, so funny did Palecek look while doing this. The King asked what was amusing them.

"If it please Your Majesty," one of them answered, "Brother Palecek is conversing with the fish."

"Brother Palecek," said the King, "what are you doing?"

"Brother King," replied Palecek, "I'll tell you. I had a brother fisherman who was drowned in the river. So I am asking these little fish if they know anything about him."

"And what do they tell you?" asked the King.

"They tell me," returned Palecek, "that they're still too young and small to know anything about it, but that I'd better ask those bigger, older fish that are on your table."

The King laughed and ordered the largest fish of all to be placed on a dish and given to Palecek. These the jester accepted gracefully and shared, amid general good cheer, with all at his table.

There were various boys' associations,

which Jozef was soon invited to attend or was asked to join. One was a boys' orchestra. In this land of music, it was very natural that all who formed a part of it should have been enthusiasts. As an encouragement to its members, the orchestra received free tickets to all the purely national concerts given in the city. Thus Jozef came to know better the works of the great Czech composers, Antonin Dvorak, Bedrich Smetana, and Zdenko Fibich. He thus also had an opportunity to hear Jan Kubelik, the renowned violinist, and Emmy Destinn, the prima donna.

Now and then the school children were taken to a national art exhibit. One of Vaclav Brozik, whose "Columbus at the Court of Queen Isabella" is known to all American children, and one of Alfons Mucha, known also in America for his poster work, but renowned in his own country in other lines as well, were followed by one of Joza Uprka, the Moravian

Slovak, whose paintings of his beloved country folks, with their riot of color, and his passionate portrayal of the action and joy of life, made Jozef for a time quite homesick for the simpler, more picturesque life of his mother's home.

CHAPTER XI

WAR

THE world rang with the assassination of the Austrian Archduke, Francis Ferdinand, and his wife, at Sarajevo, in a province of Austria-Hungary, but quite outside the Czech and Slovak lands. It was a terrible deed with which no law-loving people were in sympathy. But when Austria, backed by Germany, seized the killing as a pretext for declaring war on little Serbia, both Czechs and Slovaks felt the grave injustice, and despite all efforts made by the Government, very few of them could be induced to make any demonstration in favor of the action. When Germany mobilized, there was no doubt in the minds of any but that the War was simply one against all the Slavs, who

opposed German possession of Middle Europe and German and Magyar ideas of superiority and power.

It was a hard time through which all the Slavic people of Austria-Hungary had to pass. It was hardest on those who, like the Czechs and Slovaks, were forced to fight on a side that they detested, against their own interests. In the face of the terrorist methods employed, their resistance and sacrifices are remarkable.

The Government feared them. No sooner was war declared than Czech and Slovak troops were sent from their home lands into the Austro-Hungarian province farthest from them, Transylvania, and foreign soldiers took their places. German soldiers are said to have patrolled Bohemia's borders.

It was during the first days that Prof. T. G. Masaryk, on the advice of his colleagues who understood how the War menaced the Czech and Slovak lands, was fortunate enough to

escape from the country with one of his daughters. From then on until Czecho-Slovakia was recognized, he worked incessantly for Czecho-Slovak independence.

When Austria declared war, it did what no other country taking part in the War did: it declared war without first gaining the consent of Parliament. It was a high-handed act which the Czechs, in particular, resented. Great gloom prevailed. In sympathy with the principles of the Allies, knowing intimately the world menace of Germany as few outsiders knew it, the leaders were seeking means of protest when one after another was thrown into prison. Newspaper and magazine editors followed in quick succession. But the people, like the Hussites of old, stood firm in their faith and determination to sacrifice all for the right and to quietly resist in every way that promised to be effectual.

Jozef saw the soldiers march off from Tabor

with a look of peculiar resolve in their eyes, and heard mothers and fathers whisper with their good-bys:

"You know your duty to your native land." When later he heard of patriotic soldiers shot because refusing to go forward; of Czech and Slovak soldiers branded as traitors because they deserted to the Allies and, reforming in their ranks, fought their real enemies, the Germans of Germany, the Germans of Austria, and the Magyars of Hungary, he understood better what a big and splendid thing this duty was.

For a while, work in the school continued, but everything seemed different. Patriotic songs with their beautiful melodies were no longer allowed to be sung; the old school books with their brilliant, romantic, yet true recitals of Bohemia's wonderful, heroic past, were replaced entirely by newly written books full of praise of the Hapsburg rulers and of Germany. Jozef and the other pupils rejoiced in one thing:

they still had the same teacher. But this rejoicing did not continue long. One day they found the school doors closed and learned that the teacher had been taken to prison accused of disloyalty because he had allowed a ten-year-old pupil to walk home humming the national air, " Kde domov muj " (Where is my home?).

" Where is my home,
Where is my home?
Waters through its meads are streaming,
Mounts with rustling woods are teeming,
Vales are bright with flow'rets rare,
Oh, Earth's Eden, thou art fair!
Thou art my home, my fatherland,
Thou art my home, my fatherland! "

News of still more imprisonments and executions followed daily. The older daughter of Prof. Masaryk was imprisoned, mainly as a punishment to her father, who was working so hard against the Central Powers abroad. Machar, one of the greatest poets of Bohemia, shared the same fate because of a poem published in the United States, without the poet's

consent — a poem passed many years before by the Austrian censor!

Strange rumors spread. Once Jozef and his particular friend, Jaroslav, walked out of the city in the direction of Blanik, a mountain around which are clustered many traditions. They were overtaken and offered a ride by a very old man.

"Who are you and where are you going?" he asked.

"We're students in the Lower Gymnasium," Jaroslav answered. "We're only out for a walk, for there is no school. We're going toward Blanik, but don't expect to get so far."

"Better not," said the old man sternly. "Who knows but the old tale may be true that the Taborites never died but are hidden, as is said, in a cave there. They were to reappear at the time of Bohemia's greatest peril, you know. This may be it. There're lights in

that mountain, I tell you; don't breathe a word of it; but also don't go there."

Here he let the boys alight, and they walked on speculating on the tradition and as to just what the man meant by his last words.

"Do you think that some of the Czechs go there to discuss things?" asked Jozef. Jaroslav did not know what to think. Both boys wondered and wondered whether some great help might not come to Bohemia from the mountain.

School did not reopen, and food became very scarce. It seemed best that Jozef be sent back to his home in Slovakia in any makeshift way possible. This was done, and after a week's hard and varied travel, he reached home, almost starved. In Slovakia he found the same persecution of all suspected of lack of sympathy with the plans and purposes of the Central Powers.

Four of his relatives had been taken to fight;

of these two cousins had been killed, and one was reported to have been shot with an entire company that refused to advance against the Serbians. No one knew where the fourth relative, an uncle after whom Jozef had been named, was to be found, until Austria-Hungary was broken up and he returned home wounded. He had a story full of exciting incidents to tell and the villagers never tired of hearing it.

One day a load of miserable looking prisoners passed in cars through the village. It was terrible to see them as they lay listlessly against each other. It was plain that it had been long since they had had anything to eat or drink.

The villagers were forbidden to give them food or to satisfy their thirst, but the kind-hearted Slovak maidens found a way to help nevertheless. How the idea spread not many of the girls knew, but there was a sudden interchange of knitting material. It must have contained a message, for the girls, far thinner than

"THE VILLAGERS NEVER TIRED OF HEARING IT"

they had been before the War, met before the Church and proceeded past the cars in a body, as if to view the horrible sight. But most of them raised their eyes only for a moment. It was when each threw some crusts of bread soaked in wine in to the famishing prisoners — bread that each had denied herself from her own scanty allowance.

The prettiest girl of all blocked the way as long as she could to a Magyar officer, while the prisoners, weak as they were, fell like beasts on the unexpected treat.

"We want to see bad men. We show them we think them bad," the girl said to the officer in broken Hungarian, smiling sweetly.

He smiled in return and, nodding his approval of the sentiment, let the girls stay long enough for all evidences of what they had done, except the brighter looks of the prisoners, to have vanished.

Even harder to bear than the thought of

what their loved ones might be suffering in battle, was to see the younger children sicken because of lack of proper food. Ruzena was one of these. She became so ill that the family were seriously alarmed. She refused to eat the coarse food which was the village's daily ration and piteously begged for something different. There was nothing else to offer.

" Do go to Janik's," the mother one day bade Jozef, quite in despair, " and see if they haven't some little bit of a thing they could let us have to tempt her."

Janik's mother was full of sympathy but vainly searched her cupboards. At last she sent Janik with Jozef to see if there might not be some winter vegetable rolled in some corner of the cellar.

The boys searched but found nothing. As they were leaving there suddenly flashed upon Jozef a recollection of how he had hidden a private store some distance in the secret

passages. Hastily leaving Janik without any explanation, he ran excitedly to his mother.

"Give me the key to our cellar quick, quick, mother!" he panted.

His mother stared. "What has happened?"

But Jozef grasped the key without answering and ran. Trembling, he lit the lantern and made his way into the passage opening, to find that the earth had fallen, barring the way.

Running out again, he leaped into the courtyard, and seized a shovel, not glancing at his mother, although conscious that she stood close to the window gazing out, her face full of alarm.

Again he went into the cellar. Little by little the hardened earth was shoveled away under his feeble grasp, until he was able to crawl into the opening. The air smelled close and moldy. "One — two — three —" Jozef counted the ten steps which he remembered

having taken and looked around. No food was to be seen. He searched for the shelves — but they also had vanished.

Dumbfounded and sadly disappointed, he retraced his steps.

But instead of getting back to the opening, he unexpectedly found himself in another passage, and there, oh, joy! his food!

Loading his arms, he staggered out. Without locking the cellar door, he made his way dizzily across the street.

"Thanks be to the blessed Virgin!" exclaimed his mother in the midst of her amazement as he sank on his knees and dropped his treasure at Ruzena's bedside.

"HE DROPPED HIS TREASURE AT RUZENA'S BEDSIDE"

CHAPTER XII

UNCLE JOZEF'S STORY

I WAS drafted in July, 1915, and sent with others to a Hungarian training camp. We were not there long before we heard that we were to go to the front. On the day of departure, Anka, to whom I am engaged, came to the station with my mother. There were, of course, many other women, all with flowers in their arms and all with eyes red from weeping. For they did not want us to go to fight those who had done us no harm. My father, who had always been a great patriot, could not come, but he sent me these words which he had painstakingly copied from our greatest poet:

"It is shameful when in misery to moan over our fate; he who by his deeds appeases

the wrath of Heaven, acts better. Not from a tearful eye but from a diligent hand fresh hope will blossom. Thus even evil may yet be changed to good."

Later this fell into the hands of a German, but he did not understand it. I did.

It was hard to part. My mother, in the midst of her uncontrollable sobs, whispered:

"Jozef, when the time comes, you know what you must do."

It was hard to part. At the end, Anka gave me some red and white ribbon, the Czech and Slovak colors, which I tied around my rifle. It did not remain there long, for when the Magyar captain in charge of our battalion saw it, he swore savagely, and taking his saber, cut it off and stamped it under his heels. Not satisfied, he deliberately hit me a blow from which I suffered for many days. At the same time he muttered: "Take care what you are about, you Slovak dog!"

My companions were as indignant as myself at the insult to our colors to which we have every right. "If a time comes when we can revenge ourselves, we'll not forget," we promised one another.

By this time we had all heard, somehow, of Czechs and Slovaks who refused to fight against the Allies, declaring that they had not voted for the War, and ought not to be compelled to fight; and of many Czech and Slovak desertions. Just before we left, there was fiendish rejoicing among the Austrian Germans and Magyars, because a Czech regiment, intending to desert to the Russians, had been trapped, and all the officers and every tenth private shot. The story did not frighten us or make us less determined to surrender if opportunity offered. Better to be shot, we told ourselves, than to serve those who in victory would treat our people still worse than they had already done.

We got to the front at Rovno and all that day were kept working without a morsel to eat. We had just finished entrenching ourselves, when Russian shrapnel blew over us.

Towards morning, I heard shouting. Soon after I saw a bearded Russian with a long bayonet, standing over me. I tried to tell him I was a friend, but he had no time to listen, for Austrian machine gun shot began to come from the rear, and, with others, I was taken to a wood not far away.

It was already full of prisoners. As soon as we came, the Austrian and Magyar prisoners pitched into us, claiming that what had happened was the fault of those "Czech and Slovak cowards." Even here, the Germans and Austrians blustered and tried to order us about.

We were very hungry, but nothing was given us to eat until we reached Rovno. Here we received a little, several of us sharing one bowl.

After that we were marched to Kiev, a distance between two hundred and three hundred miles. We still had very little to eat, for Magyars and Austrian Germans had not yet got over their notion of being superior people and so entitled to more than we. When we complained, they even beat us. One poor fellow who had grabbed a loaf of bread from a Magyar who had two, was found next morning with his throat cut.

Our prison camp was at Darnica, near the city. It was just a big field with some trees, surrounded by barb wire. I remained here about two weeks when, because workmen were needed and because of Czecho-Slovak efforts in Petrograd, we were allowed to volunteer for work on farms or in ammunition factories.

I chose the latter and came to Kiev. I had not been in the city long, before I heard that Czech and Slovak prisoners were being organized to join a so-called Hussite legion which

was made up of Czech and Slovak residents of Russia, who had already rendered valuable assistance to the Russians as scouts. The Russian authorities had been opposed to the plan at first, not caring to encourage revolutionaries, even though not Russian revolutionaries. However, in the end, a grudging consent was given. I wished to join, but was not permitted to leave my work.

Then the Revolution came, and, as the prisoners were freed, the Czechs and Slovaks flocked to their own colors, and I with them. If I live forever I shall never forget how I felt when I found myself among my own people, our red and white flag waving over us, and heard the band play our "Kde domov muj."

When we had to swear our oath of loyalty to Francis Joseph before leaving Austria-Hungary, all Czech and Slovak soldiers mumbled the words. When we swore the oath of obedience to Prof. Masaryk, "the little

father," as we called him, who had come to Russia, we shouted it so joyously and loudly that the people from around came to see what all the noise was about.

CHAPTER XIII

UNCLE JOZEF'S STORY CONTINUED

I WAS so happy now. Every morning I awakened with a smile on my lips and a song in my heart. For were we not going to free our dear, our native land, of the usurper? We again sang our native songs, which we had not been allowed to sing in the land of our birth; sang them so often that we came to be known as "The Singing Czecho-Slovaks." Whatever state we came from, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, or Slovakia, we were quite united now, and had only one word for each other and that word was "Brother."

And in the spirit in which we sang, we also fought. No longer did the Germans and Magyars call us cowards. They now called us "red and white devils," because of the colors

on our hats. At the famous charge at Zborov, there was almost a religious exaltation as we marched to the field singing the glorious hymn of the Hussites: "All Ye Warriors of God." Here we captured sixty-two officers, and three thousand one hundred and fifty soldiers, fifteen guns and many machine guns, turning most of the latter against the enemy.

But our bravery did little good, the Russians were deserting the army so fast.

In 1917, I was slightly wounded. This prevented my taking part in the terrible battle at Tarnapol, in Galicia, where our men were entirely abandoned by the Russian troops. It was a wonderful charge they made, the men rushing in where danger was thickest and resisting to the last, and the officers blowing out their brains rather than surrender.

When the Germans invaded Bessarabia, before preparing to resist them, we bound ourselves by a most sacred oath:

" In the name of our national honor, in the name of all that is most dear to us as men and as Czecho-Slovaks, with full realization of this step, we swear to fight alongside of our allies to the last drop of our blood, against all of our enemies, until we have obtained complete liberation of our Czecho-Slovak nation, until the Czech and Slovak lands are reunited into a free and independent Czecho-Slovak state, until our nation is absolutely mistress of her destinies.

" We solemnly promise, whatever may be the danger and whatever may be the circumstances, without fear and hesitation, never to abandon the sacred goal of our fight.

" As faithful and honorable soldiers, heirs of our noble history, cherishing the heroic deeds of our immortal chiefs and martyrs, Jan Hus and Jan Zizka of Trocnov, we promise to remain worthy of them, never to flee from battle, to shirk no danger, to obey the orders of our officers, to venerate our flags and standards,

never and under no circumstances beg for our lives from our enemy and never to surrender with weapons in our hands, to love our companions as brothers and to give them aid in danger, to have no fear of death, to sacrifice all, even our lives, for the freedom of our fatherland.

"So freely, without pressure of any sort, we pledge ourselves to act, and so shall we act. Such is the duty imposed upon us by honor and fidelity toward our people and our country."

After the Bolsheviks gained complete control of the government, the Czecho-Slovak army numbered sixty thousand. We waited hoping that things would change for the better, until the disgusting Peace of Brest-Litovsk, in February, 1918. Then we could not but see that our only chance of continuing the fight for freedom was to get to France. Through Professor Masaryk, free passage to Vladivostok was granted us by the Bolsheviks.

It was no little thing that we undertook to do. It would have been a big enough enterprise, even under the most favorable conditions. There was a journey of over five thousand miles across Eastern Russia and Asia, and then across the Pacific, across Canada or the United States, and finally across the Atlantic. In other words, we were willing to undertake a trip around the world in order to fight for freedom. In the Russian part, we had to procure our trains and provisions, and negotiate with practically independent Soviets in every district.

Since concentration at stations was prohibited, we started for the Pacific in small detachments. Everywhere we were urged to join the Red Guard with promises of high pay and good living. But although we had little to eat, we refused the bribe. We were in demand, for afterwards, Gen. Kornilov, and Kaledines, the Cossack hetman, each tried to gain our help.

Again we refused, unwilling to interfere in Russian internal affairs.

When we reached Penza, we had a disagreeable surprise. Being the last to leave the front, we were well armed and had many cannon, machine guns and other equipment worth hundreds of millions of dollars, that would otherwise have fallen into the hands of the Germans. These we were asked to surrender on orders from headquarters, retaining only a few rifles and a few hand grenades to each train. So anxious were we to leave Russia without a fight, that we obeyed the order.

Later we heard that about this same time in Irkutsk, a train division of our men was surrounded by three thousand of the Red Guard, mainly former German and Magyar prisoners, and under German officers, all well armed and with many machine guns. Our men had only one gun to every ten men, but when the German officer gave the command to shoot, the Czechs

rushed barehanded at them, captured their guns, and in half an hour had control of the station.

Even then the Moscow authorities were begged by Masaryk, and by the French, British, and American consuls that our troops be allowed to proceed in peace. Instead, Trotsky ordered every Czecho-Slovak soldier caught with arms to be shot at sight.

At Vertunovka we had a long wait. We employed it in decorating the box cars in which we traveled, in ways to remind us of the old brave days of Jan Hus and Jan Zizka, when the Czechs of Bohemia held all of astonished Europe at bay for almost a quarter of a century. As we worked, we each resolved to prove ourselves worthy of these ancestors.

Some of the boys added inscriptions to the decorations, such as, "Long live Little Father Masaryk and the Allies," and put Czech and Slovak flags about so that our cars really looked

very nice, each platoon striving to have theirs the best.

As we made our way, by fair means when we could, by force when necessary, we found Magyar and Germans in control everywhere. Our very own first conflict came when a Magyar in a train of prisoners hit one of our men with a piece of iron, injuring him very seriously. We thought him killed and rushed to the train and demanded the surrender of the murderer. This led to more trouble. We had few arms, but took up rocks and followed the train into the city, singing as we marched. The Soviet buildings were deserted when we reached them, and evidently in a hurry, for we found some rifles which we seized with thanksgiving.

After this delay we resolved to pay no more attention to delays ordered by the Bolsheviki, but to push on as quickly as possible to Vladivostok. Fighting now began in earnest. Everywhere success was with us. Our spirit

would allow of no defeat. When we were menaced, we took the enemy by surprise; we had set out to get to France and we intended getting to France, no matter what difficulties we had to meet and conquer. We seized trains; we took city after city. While the Bolshevik propaganda failed to appeal to us, it was not it so much we fought as the objection of its supporters to, and lack of comprehension of our love of country. We knew that the Magyars and the Germans who were with the Russian Bolsheviks, fought us not so much because of our lack of sympathy with the doctrines they professed, as because of our nationality.

In the meantime, our forces constantly grew by means of new recruits. Our fame grew also as we advanced. Sometimes the mere rumor that the Czecho-Slovaks were coming, caused the enemy to flee. And all through Siberia, we were welcomed by the real inhabitants as de-

liverers. By the end of two weeks, three thousand miles of railroad were in our hands.

Then, when finally we reached Vladivostok, on the Pacific, we found that we were not to go to France after all, that the Allies thought we had a more important work to do where we were, especially in keeping the railroad, and hence the wealth of Siberian grain and mineral, from reaching the Central Powers. This was also fighting for liberty, and, without a murmur, we accepted our new duty.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CZECHO-SLOVAK REPUBLIC

It was October, and Jozef's godfather had gone again to Bohemia, this time as a delegate representing the Slovak National Council. The Czecho-Slovak National Alliance and its army had been recognized formally some time before as an ally by the great powers and greater events were scheduled to follow.

When he reached beautiful "hundred-towered" Praha, the capital, he found the streets and coffee houses jammed with people. Every face had an expectant look in which anxiety and confidence were blended. Toward the end of the month their expectations were realized. The National Council took over the government of the Czecho-Slovak countries, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia, all of

them formerly belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

It was a bloodless revolution, for the Austrian Government realized the hopelessness of its position.

All the great sufferings through which they had passed — the hunger, the fear, the grief — were forgotten by the people in the great joy of their liberation. Old men embraced each other; old women wept in each other's arms with happiness that they had lived to see the day. People from all the states, with their slight variations of dialect, were there; Czechs, Moravians, Czecho-Silesians, and Slovaks. The ties of close kinship were felt as never before.

Crowds stood on the big St. Vaclav Square listening to the Proclamation of Independence from the steps of the splendid National Museum. When the reading came to an end the people, with one voice, sang the ancient

Czech choral to St. Vaclav, Bohemia's patron saint.

Almost every hour a new report came: now that the Emperor's Governor had fled; now that the Magyar soldiers, who had been stationed in the city, cared for nothing except to be allowed to return to Hungary; now that the commanders of the local garrison had put themselves at the disposal of the Czecho-Slovak government.

Similar scenes took place in the historical Old Town Square, around the splendid monument of John Hus, that three years before had had to be unveiled by stealth. Men, women, and children felt that the noble past of which Czechs have always been so proud, was come again. Pride swelled their hearts, too, that all that they were gaining had come to them through efforts and sacrifices of their own, so great that the world had been forced to recognize and admire.

On the following day the Slovak delegates were received officially, thus uniting the two branches of the Czecho-Slovak nation.

The first act of the new state was to declare a republican form of Government with Thomas Garigue Masaryk as President.

President Masaryk was to take up his official residence in the immense royal palace so long deserted. Carpenters and others were busy modernizing it.

This palace had lived through unusual vicissitudes of fortune. Already in the tenth century, a stone fortified palace stood there, but it was not until the reign of Bohemia's beloved King Charles I that it assumed something of its present form, being modeled by him after the Louvre of Paris. It was enlarged by King Vladislav, the principal hall being named after him. In Rudolph's time other Halls were added.

After the defeat of the White Mountain,

when Bohemia lost her independence, it no longer served as a royal residence, and was practically deserted. In 1757, it was bombarded, to be rebuilt and enlarged by Empress Maria Theresa.

And now the greatest change of all: it was to be the home of the President of a thoroughly democratic state.

Many days following were festal days. People flocked to the churches, particularly to the Cathedral of St. Vitus, which is one of the great works of King Charles.

While the young people looked forward to the future, the old recalled the past.

"Ah, how King Charles in his heavenly home will rejoice," one bent old woman, supported on crutches, murmured.

"And saintly Vaclav, too," scarcely breathed another so emaciated that she looked like a moving shadow. "He'll be proud now that Bohemia is called after him the Realm of St.

Vaclav. Ah, I must see once more those precious relics we have kept of him."

With difficulty she made her way to the Cathedral where St. Vaclav's helmet, sword, and coat of mail have been religiously preserved.

Jozef's godfather sent him several picture postcards reminding him of Jozef's hero, King Charles. One represented the historic stone bridge, which Charles had had built with such care that he did not live to see it finished. On this card he wrote:

"All the statues on the bridge have a dazed expression. I wonder what they think of the change."

Another card was of the old walls of Praha, working on which through the King's care saved a thousand men from starving in a time of famine.

"I walked past these fortifications early one morning," was the message, "and hundreds of

birds were among the ruins, all singing the news of our glorious resurrection."

The third card showed Karluv Tyn, built by Charles for the protection of the crown jewels and the charters of Bohemia. This beautiful castle stands not far from Praha, on a rock of jasper a thousand feet above the River Mze. To it the King-Emperor sometimes retired for the meditative devotion which he found so helpful. On this card the message was the longest:

"Charles did more than build beautiful castles and splendid cathedrals. He welcomed men of learning and made higher education possible even for the poor by founding the University of Praha, the first university in all of Central Europe. He freed the land of robbers; he secured justice to the peasants by making it possible for them to appeal to the King from the decision of their own feudal lords. His name has come down to us revered

and beloved, because of the many evidences of his unselfish, constant thought for the people's welfare."

By a strange coincidence, on the very day that the last postcard came to Jozef in Slovakia, another reached him from his friend, Jaroslav. It was dated from the famous watering place, Carlsbad, in northern Bohemia, where Jaroslav had accompanied his father, who had some business there.

"The Germans here, who have largely control of things," it stated, "are angry at the turn affairs have taken. They clamor about the rights of the minority, they who never considered the rights of the Slavic majority. But I think they are calming down, for they see that they're going to get justice. The Czechs are not revengeful. If we treated them as they treated us — whew!" He said no more of the Germans, but humorously described some of the patients he had seen; some very fat, some

very thin, all expecting cure from digestive disturbances.

A few days before he left, Jozef's godfather took one more walk across the sixteen-arched statue-decorated Charles Bridge (Karluv most), through the picturesque Little Side, with its quaint old-time palaces of nobles, up a steep and winding street to the Hradcany, as the group of buildings around the royal palace together with it, is called.

From these heights, Praha is seen in all its wondrous beauty lying on both sides of the River Vltava (Moldau). It seems an endless succession of parks, gardens, queer roofs that are the delight of every artist that sees them, and innumerable towers and steeples. Across the river he could see the rocky Vysehrad, the seat of the early rulers. It was there that Libusa, the reputed founder of Praha, made her famous prophecy: "Lo, before me I see a city whose glory reaches to the skies!"

He mused at the great richness not only in Bohemia's real historic past but in her legendary lore; how everything about the city has its story. On the hills towards which he was turned, Vlasta, the leader of an Amazon band, made her stand in the early days against Prince Premysl; near him was the tower of Daliborka, where a noble was once imprisoned and said to have found solace in a violin. Since then ghostly music is said to haunt the place. Of the alchemists who lived near by in the Street of Gold, a street of the tiniest, most brightly-hued houses imaginable, he recalled the strange tales told. In the very courts of the palace, legends mingled with history.

A peculiar feeling that he had never experienced before came over him. To live in Praha, he felt, was not the prosaic, everyday life he had always known; it was living a brightly colored romance too disturbing for him to get

used to now. His own dear Slovakia, with its quiet, simple life, was better for him.

The next day the new President arrived from abroad, and was installed in office. That was the greatest day of all in Praha. The feeling of the multitude was expressed by one old man who said, "I shall weep no more for my dead, since they helped make the fairy tale come true that brutal force no longer rules, that a proud, deserving nation is freed at last from a bondage to which so long the world was indifferent."

THE END